

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY VICTORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 210
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C O N F I D E N T I A L VICTORIA 386

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR,MA,SE
SUBJECT: REPORTED RATSIRAKA/MANCHAM COMMENTS ON DIEGO GARCIA

REF: STATE 304921

1. SEYCHELLES' PRESIDENT MANCHAM DID NOT MENTION DIEGO GARCIA OR INDIAN OCEAN IN REMARKS DELIVERED DECEMBER 14 AT AIRPORT ON HIS RETURN TO SEYCHELLES ON BOARD INAUGURAL AIR MADAGASCAR FLIGHT FOLLOWING TWO WEEK VISIT TO SEYCHELLES' OUTER ISLANDS AND MADAGASCAR. ACCORDING TO PETER HEADY, UNDER SECRETARY FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IN PRESIDENT'S OFFICE, TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, NO COMMUNIQUE WAS ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH MANCHAM'S VISIT. HEADY STRESSED THAT, ALTHOUGH RATSIRAKA AND GOM HAD ACCORDED HIGH LEVEL TREATMENT TO MANCHAM, FOUR DAY VISIT TO MADAGASCAR WAS PRIVATE AND DICTATED PRINCIPALLY BY NECESSITY FOR MANCHAM TO RETURN TO SEYCHELLES BY AIR FROM MADAGASCAR, LAST STOP AFTER TEN DAY CRUISE TO SEYCHELLES' OUTER ISLANDS ABOARD LINDBLAD EXPLORER. (EXPLORER CONTINUED VOYAGE TO SOUTH AFRICA).

2. PER PARA 3 REFTTEL, ONLY OFFICIAL MENTION OF INDIAN OCEAN SINCE INDEPENDENCE WAS CONTAINED IN JUNE 29 INDEPENDENCE ADDRESS WHEN MANCHAM SAID SEYCHELLES "WISHES TO AVOID THE RISKS OF CONFLICT AND TO SUBSCRIBE FULLY TO THE IBOA OF THE INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE."
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IN PRACTICE, HOWEVER, MANCHAM AND GOS WELCOME VISITS BY US, UK AND FRENCH WARSHIPS, FREQUENTLY USING ARGUMENT THAT "INDIAN OCEAN SHOULD NOT BE DOMINATED BY ANY ONE POWER" (READ SOVIET UNION). CONCERNING DIEGO GARCIA, MANCHAM, ANSWERING QUESTIONS AT PRESS CONFERENCES AT TIME OF INDEPENDENCE AND AGAIN DURING RECENT VISIT OF THREE-SHIP ROYAL NAVY SQUADRON, SAID ACTIVITIES IN DIEGO GARCIA DO NOT DIRECTLY

CONCERN SEYCHELLES. PRIVATELY, MANCHAM WHO IS WARY OF SOVIET
INTENTIONS, MAY WELCOME US PRESENCE IN DIEGO GARCIA AS COUNTERWEIGHT
TO SOVIET FACILITIES AT BERBERA AND ELSEWHERE IN INDIAN OCEAN AREA.

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